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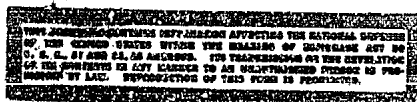
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SOURCE Liri e Komabit.PROBLEMS OF ALBANIAN LIBERATION

L'Albanie Libre, the organ of the National Committee of Free Albania, recently carried an open letter to Greece, Yugoslavia and Italy, asking them to issue a forthright declaration recognizing the territorial integrity of Albania. The newspaper Liri i Komabit, formerly I Merquari, edited by Vasil Gernemji, organ of the Independent Albanians, takes up this question and other problems relating to the liberation of Albania.

If a declaration by Greece, Yugoslavia, and Italy that they would respect the territorial integrity of Albania were made at this time, when any popularity the USSR might have had is waning, it would deprive the Tirana government of its chief propaganda point, which is the threat of invasion or partition by its neighbors.

The Greek claims to northern Epirus are cleverly exploited by the Tirana government as a mortal danger to Albania. Hoxha fans the hatred of Italy inspired by the Mussolini occupation. Tirana even exploits the aid given Hoxha by the Yugoslavs, thus reminding the people of his unpopular advisers, Dushan and Miladin.

A clear, unqualified declaration by her neighbors that Albanian liberty and territorial integrity would not be threatened would raise the morale of the people and encourage them to eliminate their real enemies, the USSR and its Albanian lackeys (1).

Several times in 1951 the international press played up the efforts of the Albanian resistance movement to overthrow the Tirana regime. The question of an uprising has become more pressing since Tito's defection placed a territorial barrier between the USSR and Albania. Now the USSR can only come to the aid of its agents in Albania by sea, which is impracticable, or by an

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invasion of Yugoslavia, which involves great risks. Communism is, consequently, weaker in Albania than among the other satellites, but a revolt against a Communist government is never easy. In Albania, Enver Hoxha and Mehmet Shehu, the strong men of the regime, have at their disposal an implacable police, instructed and commanded by Soviet technicians, and a sizable, though perhaps not completely loyal, army. Yet, since an overwhelming majority of the people is hostile to the Tirana government, it is highly probable that a popular revolt, aided by disaffected elements of the army, would succeed unless other nations intervened.

The Albanians are not Slavs, yet Tito has created at Prizren a pseudo-Albanian committee with the avowed purpose of making Albania a member state of the Yugoslav Federation. The Albanians are not Greeks, yet Greece is laying claim to half of Albania. As Marc Marceau said a few months ago, under these conditions telling Albanians to throw off the Moscow yoke is merely asking them to choose the sauce with which they will be eaten. They have experienced one false liberation and do not wish another.

If the great democratic nations will use their influence to have Albania's neighbors declare their intention of respecting her territorial integrity and liberty, the Albanians will themselves find means to overthrow the lackeys of Moscow (2).

The Albanians would, of course, feel greatly encouraged if they felt that their neighbors would not seek to partition or dominate their country, but they would not revolt unless they knew what their status would be after overthrowing the Hoxha regime. If the peasants and workers are to be mistreated, it matters little to them whether it is Shehu or some new ruler who mistreats them.

It is true that peasants and workers are dying of hunger, but it must be admitted that this was also true before 1939. The chief difference is that before 1939 they were free to emigrate. When Hoxha rose to power, the granting of certain tangible advantages, together with high hopes for the future, at first won him a certain amount of support. The hopes were blasted when the regime became a Soviet Satellite and political crimes and assassinations began. But some of the advantages still remain. Among them are agrarian reform and the right of workers to organize unions. The Albanian woman has gained the right to vote and speak on public affairs. There have also been some necessary social reforms. The people do not intend to lose these privileges by replacing the present collaborators with the USSR by new or former collaborators with other foreign powers.

Representatives of Albanian refugees and heads of exiled parties or party coalitions must issue a clear statement of their attitude on all these questions. Only when reassured that their present advantages will not be lost will the Albanians be ready to make fresh sacrifices to get rid of the Stalinists (3).

SOURCES

1. Marseille, Liri e Kombit, Jan 52, "Albania's Neighbors"
2. Ibid., Feb 52, "Can Albania's Liberation be Expected in the Near Future?"
3. Ibid., "The Emigres Ought to Define Their Attitude on the Social Changes in the Albania of Today"

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